Drip Irrigation in the Country

4508. SHRI SURESH PACH-OURI: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that drip irrigation helps to save water bet ween 30 % to 70 % and also increases yields by 30% to 70%;

(b) whether experts have stated that drip irrigation was specially suited for high value low volume crops such as fruits, flowers and vegetables;

(c) if so, what is the number of plastic culture development centres in the country; and

(d) to what extent the National Commission on the use of plastic culture has been able to help in the drip irrigation programme?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI J. VENGAL RAO):

(a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The drip irrigation helps in saving water and increasing yield particularly in respect of high value, low volume crops such as fruits, flowers and vegetables.

(c) So far 18 Plasticulture Development Centres (PDCs) have been set up, out of which 9 PDCs arc working on drip irrigation.

(d) Besides taking up R&D activities through PDCs, the National Committee on the Use of Plastics in Agriculture has initiated number of activities to encourage iliip irrigation such as:

(i) Formulation and introduction of pilot • scheme for drip irrigation in six States like Karnataka, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

(ii) Assisting in formulation of ISI standards for drip irrigation components.

(iii) Most of the commercial banks have agreed to extend loans to farmers for installing drip irrigation, under NABARD refinancing scheme.

Setting up of Petro-chemical Authority

4509. SHRI SURESH PACH-OURI: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are proposing to set set up a Petro-chemical Authority:

(b) if so, what will be the main purpose of this Authority;

(c) by when the same is likely to be set up; and

(d) to what extent the setting up of such an Authority will be beneficial to the country?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI J. VENGAL RAO):

(a) to (d) Yes, Sir. There is a proposal to set up a Petto-chemical Promotion Development Authority for development and promotion of Petro-chemical industry. A final view on the proposal is however, yet to be taken.